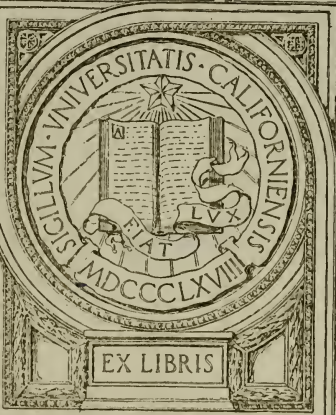


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Quarterly Publication of the His-
torical and Philosophical
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JANUARY-MARCH

Selections from the William Greene
Papers, I

CINCINNATI
THE ABINGDON PRESS

The Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio published in their *Quarterly*, IX, No. 3, 1914, a series of letters of the Honorable Thomas Corwin to Oran Follett, Esq., of Sandusky, Ohio. Recently the Society has acquired, through the generosity of Miss Annie L. Roelker, additional letters of his, written to William Greene, Esq., an attorney of Cincinnati, and a close personal friend of the writer, to whom he gave his thoughts, or fancies, as well as views on various subjects, with entire freedom, in his impulsive, open-hearted manner, quite regardless of methods of expression. These letters are characteristic of the man, evidencing his integrity, justice, loyalty to his political party and friends, and, also, his abhorrence of political intrigue and the sacrifice of truth and honor to self interest. It is thought they are of sufficient interest to justify their publication.

Mr. Greene was a strong abolitionist and actively interested in politics, particularly in the William Henry Harrison campaign. He was a successful lawyer and, Ford in his "History of Cincinnati," p. 316, states that "He was an able and learned man, and did a large business" and "Once or twice was a candidate for Congress, but unsuccessfully." In 1866 he returned to his native State of Rhode Island, where he served as Lieut. Governor. For further account see *Quarterly* XII, No. 4, p. 157, 1917.

L. B. Hamlin.

LETTERS OF THOMAS CORWIN¹ TO
WILLIAM GREENE,² 1841-1851

I

(Private)

Lebanon 12th May 1841

Dear Sir

I have been confined to my bed since Sunday with a pretty fierce intermittant fever. I had heard that you expected a Diplomatic appointment of some grade.

I rec[eive]d a letter from Ewing³ on Saturday last (in reply to one from me recommending a young man of Cincinnati for the consulate at Havanna) in which he informed me that *he* wished to give that appointment *to you*. This was news indeed to me; I had insisted that the consul at Havanna should come from Cincinnati, & replied to Ewing's letter immediately saying all I could under the circumstances in favor of your appointment. From the tenor of Ewing's letter I am sure he wishes to serve you. You misunderstand him, you are not acquainted with him well enough to interpret his conduct.

I have had occasion to condemn this mode of dispensing patronage too. I do not understand it but we must remember the great difficulties inherent in such business & believe (as I do) that all is done with the best intentions. I must to bed again.

Yrs very truly

Tho Corwin

W. Greene

[Cincinnati, Ohio.]

¹ These letters of Corwin's were written during the years he was Gov. of Ohio, 1841-2; U. S. Sen. 1845-50; Sec. of Treas. 1850-53. Cf. *Quar.* IX, 3.

² See *previous page*.

³ Thomas Ewing, then (1841) Sec. of Treas.

II

(Private)

Lebanon 2d July 1841

Dear Green

I recd a letter thro Gov Morrow⁴ from Washington city, from you this morning. I wrote long ago to Ewing & Tyler⁵ & I think also to Webster⁶ saying all I could invent in the way of argument respecting your appointment. You may know probably that I recommended another early in the winter for this same place. I did this at the instance of some one or two very reputable citizens of Cincinnati without any knowledge that you wished the appointment. I explained to Ewing my situation growing out of this state of things & if the rogues at the Capitol think my opinion or wishes worth any thing they have them. I confess I have felt some mortification at some few things they have done there lately where I had given my advice at their request, but I take it for granted that some controlling necessity was at work & so console my wounded pride.

I did intend to go on to Washington but have been prevented by business partly public & partly private. I see Judge Wright⁷ has been there & he I know has done all that any one could for you.

Yr friend

W Green Esqr

Thos Corwin

III

Lebanon 15th Jany 1842

Dear Green

I have recd your letters written within the last week. They reached me here, after traveling by me to Columbus & back again. Well what are we to have next? That is a question which your citizens may as well ask and answer for themselves *now*. Do not imagine, that the spirit which has been invoked

⁴ Jeremiah Morrow, M. C. at this time.

⁵ John Tyler, President.

⁶ Daniel Webster, in Tyler's cabinet.

⁷ Judge John C. Wright, in 1841 was Ed. of Cin. Gazette.

to plunder & destroy the hateful & pestiferous, will rest, & nicely discriminate before it proceeds to havock again; never was that Devil conquered & tolerated, without drenching his friends with the red cup of slaughter before he left them. Such is man however. With all the bloody pictures in the book of time before his eyes, he gravely declares *himself* & his *time* an exception, & proceeds to add another Chapter to the work, & another name to the Catalogue of self deceived—fools. Your citizens must have winked at all the diablerie set forth in your newspapers. It could not have been otherwise—and King Mob, will *make* them wink whether they will or not, when he proceeds according to his sovereign pleasure to enforce King Law in their cases, for this afsd[aforesaid] King Mob has in all time been remarkable for his most stern impartiality. He will not even recognize the bookish distinctions, between the good & the bad, the right & the wrong. Besides he is the true sovereign “pure divine.” His proscription dates back to the Morning of time. He first was born of woman, mobbed & murdered, the second Cain proclaimed this right & from that moment through the old Chaldean, Assyrian, Babylonian, Greek & Roman times, his Majesty with various fortune, has still preserved himself, sometimes a *first*, & never less than a second rate power. God help us, whither do we tend? What a brief story is the history of a great nation—Chap. 1 Liberty- Chapter 2 Glory- Chapter 3 Wealth- Chapter 4 Vice- Chapter 5 Corruption- Chapter 6 Anarchy- Conclusion Barbarism, Despotism, Oblivion, Finis. After all that has been written, is not my book without preface, note or appendix, the very truest & therefore the very best. As to the Why’s, the Laws, & such like silly & unphilosophical stuff, to what end should they be inserted? Has any man or any nation ever acted wisely because they were wisely instructed? Name one if you can, & then I will hurra for the March of Mind, & drink toasts in cold water, to the Memory of the 19th Century. Good night. I go to Columbus in the morning to contradict a lie. What an errand!! It cannot be done otherwise so go I must & will. Pray drop me a line saying when you will get up another robbery—I am in want of a little cash & will attend. This is a great age for benevolent societies—your way of supplying the poor I like; it is so prompt & certain, & no tears, prayers, & such like New Testament foolery. A stab—a thrust—and your purse is full.

A big fee those by law protected
Liberty's a glorious feast
Courts for cowards were erected
Churches built to please the Priest. With such a
lullaby I shall sleep sound. Good night again, & may God bless
you with long life & a cold, tough heart.

Thos Corwin

W Green

IV

Lebanon 21st March 1842

Dear Sir

I have perused carefully as possible, the strange correspondence you sent me. I am puzzled by the suspicions and conjectures to which it gives rise in my mind. That Mr Webster is your friend I do not doubt. It is natural, nay necessary from his nature that he should be so. But to what extent he would go *against* his party & conventional friends to serve you is what cannot be exactly determined. That he has these two classes of friends & these two adversary motives to ballance is beyond a doubt. Is he Daniel Webster as Daniel *was* he must be & desires to be your friend. Is he Dan^l Webster *Secy of State, John Tyler being President*, he must be the friend *officially* of many a man whom he *really* abhors. His self love & *supposed* self interest have placed him in a false, an abominable position. He is the bond slave to a weak ambitious egotist, whom he secretly despises. He therefore is driven to assume, & to palter in a double sense, to prevaricate & possibly to do worse, if worse than these can be imagined. That he has no power beyond his Master's will is certain, since he admits he has been laboring to serve you & cannot. I do not see that you can do any thing to place you in a more honorable or even favorable position than that you now occupy. I am not however skilled in these matters & would rather be governed by Judge Wright's opinion than my own. I shall be in the city in a few days & can *talk* more fully on the subject.

Yr friend

W Green, Esq. Cina, Ohio

Thos. Corwin

Lebanon 13th Feby 1844

Dear Green,

At 8 P. M. and rather sorely fatigued with professional toil I sit down, stupid as if I had swallowed a hogshead of the waters of Lethe, to give reasons, apologies or vain excuses for not answering your letter sooner—and by the way to scold a little *at* you. You don't like the nomination of Spencer⁸ because he is not an old hard working Whig. My friend, are you serious? Are you in earnest when you offer this gravely as an objection to a candidate? Have you no rationality in you, or about you—Are “ye clean daft!” Do you expect to see—Did you ever see—Did you ever learn, from fable, legend, or historical record, that the sober unobtrusive virtue of hard work, was in this world, rewarded, nay, even so much as known as a fact existing & capable of proof by any respectable number of living witnesses? No, no, *this* God help us, is not our way in this quack grammar school “below the sun,” how it may in Eternity's University—yes, how it *may* be *there*. Why, pray, you ask your talking club that question. How it *ought* to be that I know, I think, right well—but these two words *ought* & *is*, I should think a man of fifty or near it, might have had some experience touching the difference between them. Now hear the reasons on *tother* side. Spencer has been a Judge & a reasonably good one, he has been at a Newark convention of young men in '42 when and where he spake to these same youth with reasonable *eclat*, Mark that- these youth go back to every Co[unty] in the State & cry glory! to *young Judge* Spencer. Then again he goes to the Grand Lodge at Lancaster & makes a fine oration, touching charity brotherly kindness & the *Squire* & the brethren say Amen so mote it be, & glad of heart they shake brother Spencer by the hand & cry God bless you, & from thence there is carried forth into all corners of the State balmy good will & *favorable* knowledge of this same now newly proposed governor. Now don't you see that there 'is in this man the stuff of which popularity is made up. What next of a character to stand to, belongs to Oliver? He is a sensible, reasonably well informed man & to all common intents honest, with a right social good fellowship sort of a heart. Why not make a Gov[ernor] of this same man then.

⁸ Judge Oliver M. Spencer, Jr., 1809-1858, of Cincinnati. Cf. *Greve's Cent. Hist. of Cincinnati, I, 769.*

As to his being fooled to this purpose by Fisher⁹ & Co., that I am sure is a mistake, I named him myself when in Cincinnati last, before I had heard any thing said of him as a candidate, & I doubt not the sin (if such it be) of *suggesting* him *out* lies at my door. Now dont you fly into a pet & say—look you Corwin I did not think you were such a fool. I wish we may get as good a man as Spencer. Think you *of* whom & *from* whom the public will compel us to choose. Fisher, good hearted, sound hearted, but not enough strong headed, Fisher, is the man, so far as the general brunt goes yet. I prefer, hear me, I am in earnest, I do greatly prefer Spencer. Good night, I have unburthened myself & come what will I know I have laid my thoughts upon the heart of a friend, let its faithful too partial pulsations rock them into the sleep of oblivion. Oh this terrible business of taking care of the Republic. Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander, Caesar, Genghis Kahn, Bajazet, Tamerlane, Napoleon, Dr. Francia, ye are the men I honor, your way was so short, so easy. Sun stand thou still on Gibeon!!! My heroes aforesaid talked very much after that fashion- they were obeyed or if not, off went a head or so & the word was made good. How different our Babel! But I am growing garrulous—prolix, & so good night, pleased or in wrath. May God bless you.

W Green

Tho Corwin

Cincinnati, Ohio

VI

Lebanon 27th Nov 1844

Dear Green,

Let us have an end to complaining. The world is only going on at its old gate, what right have we to an exemption from the follies & fate of the rest of Adam & Eve's sons and daughters. Let calamity come, it is better for us than lies & hypocrisy. I very much prefer that all the ills consequent on the measures asked for by the hot & soft headed southerners should be mixed into one infernal drink and swallowed by the whole people of the

⁹ Hon. David Fisher, lacked only three votes of being made Governor of Ohio in the Whig Convention, 1844, beaten by Mordecai Bartley. The reference is probably to him as he was always a strong whig and republican.

Union, than that the lying Demagogue should first gull them & then avoid the certain doom that awaits him when he fulfils his promises. Our Whigs cry out "stand by your arms—the country needs you now to save it"!! The scoundrell liars of P[ennsylvania], are beginning to whine & pray that their sweet little god Polk may not frown on Protection. Never never shall we get rid of that pestilent breed of Demagogues till we allow them to prove their faith by their works. Let us have free trade, let us have Texas *attempted*, mark that *attempted*, to be annexed—Let a joint resolution to that effect pass, let us have war with Mexico with England's gold & ships to help her. Let all this with taxation to the teeth & then the miserable dupe weeping out of his coal mine or Iron Bank half starved, but still strong with desperation, will grapple the swindler that deceived him by the throat & pull out from its roots the tongue that told him the Whigs were foes to the poor laborer. This cheerful lesson *alone* can break the allegiance that honest ignorance owes & pays to the Demagogues. I had much rather my children should live on acorns & Beech nuts than grow up in wealth amongst a people whose daily example teaches that lies & dissimulation are the only instruments of success. We shall see the southern disunionist & the northern & western swindler meet! Aye and that in one week from this time & less. What then, mutual distrust, reciprocal complaint, & in the end mortal quarrel & deadly hatred. The Whigs meantime are expected by the rascal of N[ew] York & the mongrel fool & knave of Pennsylvania to step in & save the country, *he* & *they* meantime living & revelling on the plundered offices of the Republic. Is this to be endured? It *is* expected. Better in my judgment would it be in the long run to let the abused & misled see & feel for once that their Architects of evil *can* ruin them, *then* we are rid of them for twenty years at least. I know this is by some considered wrong in every sense. Show me any other hope of cure for the disease & I will adopt it at once.

Never would I unite with these enemies of God & man in their own proper work, but I only ask good men to let them alone, that the people may *see* & *believe*, for without seeing it done & actually wrought out they will not believe, that any thing else than *their* Democracy is to be trusted. *I am writing this for you only.* These are my own individual feelings & opinions. I may be in a situation soon where the opinions & wishes of many others would require me to modify & greatly mollify my theories.

You speak of the Judgeship of the Superior court as a place you might accept, & ask me to say a word in that behalf. I can & will do so, but you just remember, that *first* of all, & most potent will be the *word* of the Whig bar of Cinci[nnati.] Let me admonish you therefore to look in that direction for strength. I go to Columbus in a day or two, where I shall spend two weeks—at court not at the legislature. Here or there I am yr friend
W Greene, Esq. Tho Corwin.

VII

Lebanon 5th Feby 1845.

Dear Friend

I am so exactly situated between pressing *duty* & a somewhat lazy moral sense that I scarcely know which way to turn & stand straight. I have a business engagement at home which cannot be disposed of until Saturday next & I am compelled to be at Butler court on the 17th Inst. I must therefore I believe set out on Sunday next, so as to be at Columbus on Monday morning.

I find the Hacks do not *now* (as formerly they did) stop at Xenia. So as we have to be out all night we had as well take the warmest coach. But again on the hack line you will go from Cinci[nnati], to Columbus for \$2, in the other I suppose you pay \$5 or 6. So take your choice, & I will be ready for you but just drop me a line on *Friday* saying in which I am *certainly* to find you here.

(Private)

When passing thro Cinci[nnati] last week on my return from Gallipolis, a friend of yours Johnston (the Surveyor Gen^l) told me he had asked Judge Coffin¹⁰ to make *you clk* of the Superior court. Do you know of this? If not think of it. It may suit you, give you some income & leave leisure for cultivation. Dont fail to write *on Friday*.

Yr friend
Tho Corwin

W Green Esq.

¹⁰ Charles D. Coffin of Cincinnati, Judge of the Superior Court.

VIII

Lebanon 9th Feby 1845

Gentlemen:

Yesterday the Dayton stage came to this place with *Thirteen* on it. I am so pressed for time in consequence of the session of the com[mon] pleas at Butler next week, that I *must* be in Columbus, on Monday morning *next* or not at all. I judged it therefore the only *safe* plan to take the first *vacant* seat. I shall see you I hope at the Neal House tomorrow at 8 in the morning. Why have we not a *railroad* from Cin[cinnati] to the capitol of a *State*, containing a population equal to $\frac{2}{3}$ rds of the people who captured Cornwallis at Yorktown.

Yr friend

Messrs Green & Wing, Esqs.
At Lebanon, Ohio.

Th Corwin

IX

Washington City 14th Jany 1846

Dear Green,

My time is so wasted, (that portion at least not necessarily taken up in the senate) that I have not found since my arrival here, one poor half hour, that I could devote to *such* communion with a friend—as that relation demands. Just now I have concluded to appropriate that time to you instead of attending a wedding at Genl. Jessup's whither I had intended to go, & should, had not one of those impulses, which somehow will be obeyed, commanded *no*, ten minutes ago.

The Newspapers no doubt keep you accurately informed of all the outside transactions here, such as the hopes of War by the half civilized Barbarians, that rule our *19th Century Republic*, & also the fears of War generated by the love of & devotion to Mammon which is so strongly felt by a great portion of our people, especially on the exposed maritime frontier of the Union. I do not intend to say that the men *in* power hope for war, but that those who *gave* them power wish it, hope for it, not as I believe for the excusable purpose of vindicating National rights, but, because such are gratified by confusion, upturning & sub-

version of all established things around them. Portions of that class however who *seem* to want war, very much desire that the Whigs should *seem* to oppose it & effectually prevent it, & thus derive a pretext for another attack on a vile National prejudice. These rogues for the last fifteen years have been setting the country on fire & then calling on & relying on the Whigs to extinguish the flames. We have been a most faithful & efficient fire-company for these incendiaries & I begin to ponder the proposition to let (for once) the fire have its unchecked & most destructive career. If it were any thing less odious than causeless war I should feel a strong inclination to offer no opposition to its progress. Take the case before us. The cupidity of the nation was invoked to transfer the treaty making power under foot in order to obtain Texas. This had its origin with Mr. Calhoun¹¹ & his southern slave holding transcendentalists. Party profligacy in the North & West bartered faith & conscience for participation in power, & the villainy succeeded. But the contracting parties at the Balt[imore] Convention, had stipulated also for the *whole* of Oregon. The election of Polk was the result. The south has obtained Texas by fraud & the West calls on her to seize Oregon by force- force to be exerted against John Bull with her 200 Steam Vessels & 160 Millions of Leige subjects, not against imbecile, distracted Mexico. What follows- The south, this same south, comes with pale face & uplifted hands imploring these vile Whigs, unpatriotic *Federal* Whigs, to save them from Polk & the insanity of modern reckless, revolutionary Democracy. We say to them, Why, how is this? Had you united with us & kept Polk out, you see we should have had no sign of war about Oregon, we always opposed these movements of yours looking to war either for the acquisition of territory or the adjustment of a boundary in a remote unsettled & as yet undesirable part of our domain. Ah, true says your southern democrat but you Whigs were always the conservative power to whom the nation looked for salvation, so do not disappoint your country's hope now in her hour of extremist peril!! Now is not this cool impudence enough to provoke retaliation? Might not a reasonably patriotic spirit be willing to say "Ephraim is joined to his Idols," *let him alone*. Give us credit my friend for Christian fortitude, should we forget every thing of this sort, (as we shall) & save these miscreants

¹¹ John C. Calhoun, U. S. Sen., re-elected 1845.

from the curse of their own bad conduct. We shall do what is right in the premises, irrespective of these considerations, because their fate & ours are bound up with that of the too confiding but still honest Masses who have been deceived & misled in giving power to weak & wicked men.

The Cabinet is perfectly mosaic in its hues. Buchanan¹² is treated as no gentleman would treat a sensible hireling. For example Woodward¹³ *from Pa.* is nominated by the President for the vacant seat on the Bench of the Supreme Court, and Buck does not *hear* of this till a friend drops him a note (in pencil) saying "it has been done yesterday." Thus Dallas¹⁴ & Walker¹⁵ prevail over "Pennsylvania's favorite son," yet the ass bears his burden & still shakes his ears, & *is Secy* of State!! Marcy¹⁶ trembles between the threats of Barnburners & the indifference of Old Hunkers, & will "*do what is thought best for the party,*" Walker sits in the seat of Alexander Hamilton. His report this year assumes that every suggestion of his great Predecessor on the same subject is mere visionary crudity!! Bancroft¹⁷ poor fellow can write colonial History in diction somewhat oriental, but is I fear sadly wanting in that robust sense, so necessary in dealing with the straight forward & gallant spirits who have born our flag always proudly on the sea. And Polk,¹⁸ God help us, his mission is to reform the abuses and save us from the follies of George Washington!! Every thing *new* & hitherto unheard of is for *that* reason *true*. Every truth realised for a year is, for the reason that it *is* one year old, pronounced an absurdity. Experience invariably teaches only error. Experiment is the only road to *safe* & sure prosperity!!! Such are the men that rule & such the Philosophy of our times. Is there hope *of* us or *for* us? I answer yes, as all earthly things (folly amongst others) are not eternal, and as God has yet power to "make the breath of man to praise him" there is hope, and the streaks of the dawning are plainly shooting up, giving cheerful promise of day.

¹² James Buchanan then Sec. of State in Polk's cabinet.

¹³ George W. Woodward of Pa. was then President Judge of the Fourth District.

¹⁴ George Mifflin Dallas, Vice President, 1844-1849.

¹⁵ Robert J. Walker, Sec. of Treasury at this date, 1846.

¹⁶ William L. Marcy, then Sec. of War.

¹⁷ George Bancroft, then Sec. of Navy.

¹⁸ James K. Polk, President.

I have only room to acknowledge the receipt of your letters—both came safely to hand.

If the Judgeship in Ohio should be vacant, Vinton¹⁹ & Schenck,²⁰ & your unworthy friend to boot will do whatever three *such* can do, to have the right man there. Both these gentlemen (& neither are your every day sort) expressed a very warm desire to see you on the Bench. Let me obtain your forgiveness for reminding you that the good opinion of such is worth more for *here* & the hope of *hereafter*, that twenty years of accidental popular approbation. . . .

Yr friend

Tho Corwin

X

Washington City 16th June '46

Dear Green

I have considered the subject of your letter long ago, it was before our Com[mittee] on Roads & canals very early in the Session & but for the present & *then* anticipated war with Mexico, we should have reported a Bill, Hannegan,²¹ Jno. Davis²² & myself being a majority. But as our Democracy prefers to pay money for blowing out brains, rather than for blowing up & getting round rocks, that impede the progress of the most efficient civilizer of our Barberous race—commerce—we must for the present submit.

Today the Secy of the Treas[ur]y²³ reports a debt of 19 millions at the end of the year. Every body has known it will be 40. This we shall provide for by treas[ur]y notes & a loan. Texas will cost us yet 100 millions of dollars, *mark my estimate*.

I sincerely regret the idle *stuff* in Scott's²⁴ correspondence, at *bottom* he has reasonably sound sense. His "plate of soup," is one of the Bubbles that rises to the surface of his mind, indicating

¹⁹ Samuel F. Vinton, Rep. in Cong. from Ohio.

²⁰ Robert C. Schenck, Rep. in Cong. fr. Ohio.

²¹ Edward A. Hannegan, U. S. Sen. fr. Indiana.

²² John Davis, U. S. Sen. fr. Mass.

²³ See Note 15.

²⁴ Lt. Gen. Winfield Scott.

the presence of a little *personal* vanity. The charges against Webster have vanished into thin air as you will have seen I hope with pleasure. I am not at liberty to give particulars but you may rest assured our difficulties with England are settled—few days will divulge the secret. I think they will greatly increase the chances of a speedy adjustment of our Mexican troubles. We are at this moment perpetrating enormous wrong upon a weak & a to us unoffending people, we have robbed her, & now kill to secure our plunder. The President began this war & we were compelled to get out of his quarrel by fighting for what we falsely deem our *Honor*. We intend to hold the guilty authors to a strict account for this. God knows whether the country will heed us, at all events we may hope to find “fit audience though few.”

Truly yr friend
Tho Corwin

W Green Esq

XI

Eaton [Ohio] 6th. Oct 1846

Dear Greene,

I am thus far on my way to Greenville. Riding alone in this very pleasant weather I could not avoid reflection if I would. I of course pondered seriously your attention. I had a very long talk with Anderson²⁵ He is candid, kindly disposed & your true friend, fully appreciates your worth, & the extremely disagreeable position you occupy. But after all, holds that it *is* & must be submitted to. Straight²⁶ was induced to run by a goodly number of Whigs, & confident in his strength will not decline, you I suppose cannot, & now it only remains to turn all to some good account if possible. Perhaps your friends would not go to the election but for your sake, & may be the same is true of Straight's. This will increase our vote. So far all is well, the mischief may turn up in the end, should it appear that your votes united ex-

²⁵ Charles Anderson, atty. of Cincinnati.

²⁶ Thomas J. Straight, atty. of Cincinnati; unsuccessful candidate for Cong. 1846.

ceeds the votes for Farran.²⁷ This will furnish a negative example for future use.

Wearied with toil, travel & speaking I cannot but moralize upon the miseries, follies & the incapability of our race to fulfil the object of its creation. What work, what expence, what sacrifice it requires to keep us from eating & throttling each other. My intimate acquaintance with all grades of our people, satisfies me of the mournful fact, that we are far from that promised day when "Holiness to the Lord shall be engraved on the belts of the horses." The passive world looks, & is, beautiful, calm, solemn & in all senses glorious. It is man alone that mars the great harmonies of nature. God help us, will prayer avail us? Try it. I am off to Greenville in ten minutes. Goodby.

Tho Corwin.

W Greene

XII

Washington City 14th Decr 1846

Dear Greene,

I have written to five Members of the Legislature on the subject of the Cinci(nnati) Judgeship. Schenck has written to all of them with whom he is acquainted. Vinton has also assured me he would write Goddard²⁸ & Coombs²⁸, both very active Whigs. Now there should be some one on the spot. I say one-two, or two hundred would do better, to urge on the Whigs the propriety of your election. Look to *this* yourself, see that it is done. There is no other way of salvation in these matters. Write to my nephew, Franklin Corwin, he is a member of the Ho. of Reps. from Clinton Co. He is a clever lawyer & a very clever young fellow. I have written to him on the subject.

In haste Yr friend

W Greene Esq
Cinca

Tho Corwin

²⁷ James J. Faran, atty of Cin., elected to Congress, 1846.

²⁸ Charles B. Goddard and Joseph J. Coombs, Mem. of Gen. Assembly of Ohio.

XIII

Lebanon 30th March 1847

Dear Sir

I recd yours of yesterday just now. I have not seen the article to which you refer but I cannot suppose (if it be a covert attack) that the person you suspect of the authorship is the right one. *He* cannot be so unspeakably small, so unutterly mean. What is the character of that ambition which could seek to rise by such means. The dagger & the bawl are far more honorable than a mere insinuated assault. I think I foresee that I must rid myself of the suspicion of aspiration. I can do no good while that Shirt of Nessus is about me. Besides I am likely to be tempted, even as others, to become somewhat more of a scoundrill & a fool than it has pleased God to make me. Pray send me the Atlas²⁹ that I may see the defense you make, not of me, I dont mean that, but of the truth.

I did receive the invitation you speak of & have concluded to decline the dinner. Judge Mc Lean's³⁰ friends have been making against me as I learn charges of attempting to supplant him in Ohio. It is an imputation which I so much abhor, that I am determined to give no countenance to it, therefore I shall refuse to meet the good men of Cincinnati lest that might be laid hold of—yet if I thought public good would be promoted slander would not deter me. I have learned to feel indifferent to that when duty, clear duty, commands.

Truly yr friend

W Greene

Tho Corwin

XIV

Lebanon Sunday night 11th April '47

Dear Greene,

A little leisure is as dangerous as a little learning, either however is very agreeable, & I shall not complain of the half hour given me just now since it allows me the pleasure of saying a word or two to one that I am sure will not care to waste five minutes or so in spelling it out.

²⁹ Cincinnati Daily Newspaper.

³⁰ Judge John Mc Lean.

I read your "Charles Hammond"³¹ with great delight, unfeigned pleasure. You exposed the deformity, gross abominable errors of that unhappy "editorial." It is true your path was plain enough, to you it was so, but not so did it seem to him, whoever he was, who lucubrated that miserable jumble of absurdities. What struck me was the total ignorance of the author as to English history—"Why, says he, "resort to the turbulent periods of British history for precedents" as if withholding supplies by an English house of commons was an exception. Does not every Tyro know that as soon as the house of commons took this *ground*, they did actually possess themselves of the War making power, nay, of the power to regulate the *policy of the crown* in all things. Peace, War, trade, & internal police; If the Commons "throws out a Bill" the crown changes heads, in other words Russell the free trader upsets Peel and so through the whole circle of British policy.

I felt quite sure the article was not written by the *man* you suspected though I have learned with equal regret & surprise that it speaks his sentiments on the subject. I have almost made a god unto myself of the Whig party but if it does adopt a vigorous prosecution of this War as a dogma believing it (as they declare) to be unjust, then I am content to see it uprooted to its foundations. I do not say that an honest man may not honestly hold this doctrine, for the wild beast is so predominant in most men that I am well aware of the patient *painful* strength it requires to tame the tiger in them. But I see cheering proof from all quarters of the existence of a sound morality on this subject. I have hope (dont laugh at me) of the speedy arrival of the time when public affairs shall be required to be conducted, on those principles of justice & integrity, which every *gentleman* regards as his only proper rule of life. I think the manifest evils of this war, & the wicked acts of our rulers, will so shock the moral feeling & *purse* of the country, that the two causes combined must *drive* public men to the adoption of a purer code of political ethics. The infernal divinities require too many *costly* sacrifices—their alters will be abandoned. "Si³² flectere si nequeo superos, Acheronta movebo" would answer for a heathen prayer, it will not do in the 19th Century of the Christian Era.

³¹ Signature used by William Greene upon newspaper articles.

³² Verg. aen VII, 312. Trans.: If I cannot bend the gods above I will stir up Achereon (the lower World.)

I think the War, so far as bloodshed is in it, is nearly over. Mexico is exhausted & *can't* fight, our purse is growing lank & we *wont* fight. Pardon my want of charity, the powers at Washington have by trying to pill Taylor,³³ *qualified* him to be President, they will not let Scott,³⁴ if they can help it, dictate a peace "from the Halls, of the Montezumas." Scott burns to be in the City of Mexico but I see he complains at Vera Cruz of want of supplies, & I hear that the War Department is endeavoring to stop the further purchase of horses & mules under contracts recently made. Thus it will turn out that this war was begun & carried on to perpetuate a dynasty—it will end in its overthrow. Is this strange? not at all, all, almost all the wars from the 14th to the 18th Century were caused for the same end. Alas, our poor horny-fisted democrats little dream that their brains were blown out at Palo Alto, Monterey & Bueno Vista, merely to increase the democratic poll book in Anderson township. Will they ever see through it? Some will. The grave of Homer (who said he went to *fight* to find a short cut to political preferment) will make them *think*. At fifty one begins to open his eyes; that half way house between two worlds is a marvellously proper college to educate a gentleman for *eternity*, pity that time is not left him here to graduate a few, before he, himself, has to quit. But so it has pleased the Maker of all. Well we shall have many a hearty laugh over these follies when we get to the Elysian fields. I wish Judge Wright³⁵ could or would take a calm view of these things with his eyes open. He is mystified with expediences & various other "re-futabilities." He will find they are naught.

Schenck³⁶ has this moment come in & my wife & family are returned from church. All send you & yours kindly regards & so goodnight.

W Greene

Cinca, Ohio

Tho Corwin

³³ Zachary Taylor.

³⁴ Lt. General Winfield Scott.

³⁵ John C. Wright of Cincinnati.

³⁶ Robert C. Schenck of Ohio.

(Private)

Lebanon 7th June 1847

Dear Greene,

In the Nat[ional] Era which came to me today, I find a paragraph on Presidential matters which says I have been nominated in the northern part of Ohio. I certainly have seen no such nomination. But the paragraph suggests that I take *that* occasion to decline. I confess myself guilty of pondering much on that subject, & my reflections have led me to the conclusion that duty as well as self respect both required me to do so. I consulted Woods³⁷ & Bebb³⁸ on this point last week in Hamilton, & they both decided against it on one ground, or rather for one *only* reason. They say I represent a certain principle touching the Mexican war, that if I decline, those who agree with me can make no *concerted* stand on two points. First the Constitutional rule in regard to supplies—the power of Congress over the army & when engaged in War, and secondly, the expediency of acquiring further territory.

I see but one aspect in which this suggestion can have any force, it is this. In the settlement of these questions Presidential aspirants seeing a clique or party of that sort formed, may come over more readily to those views in order to gain strength, and thus they may become established doctrines. If my pride had not long ago (as I humbly trust) been subordinated to what I conceive to be my duty, I should not listen to such a proposition, but in times like these I do not think any man at liberty to select his position in reference to personal feelings. I wish to know what you think of this. I assure you that I have not the remotest idea that I shall be the candidate, and the question is, shall I permit my name to be used as a means to attain the ends above specified, that is, the establishment of the principles of Congressional control in the cases stated, & the abandonment of all further acquisition of territory.

I engaged your daughter to spend some time with my family this summer I hope you will offer no opposition. The present session of the Female academy closes in three weeks when I hope she may be willing to rusticate with my children for awhile. Meantime write me on the matters above suggested.

³⁷John Woods was then Auditor of State-Ohio.

³⁸Governor William **W**ebb of Ohio, 1846-1848.

Why dont your city hold a meeting & appoint Deputy to the River & Harbor convention at Chicago to be held on the 5th of July next? See to this, will you

Yrs truly

Tho Corwin.

W Greene Esq

XVI

Lebanon 25th July 1847

Dear Greene,

Your letter with that of Gen^l Greene inclosed reached me this morning.

I was very much pressed by Mosely³⁹ & others from Buffalo, & some of the Boston delegation to visit these two places this summer. Under ordinary circumstances such a trip would be delightful, but as matters now stand I am not sure but duty to myself requires, that I should forego both the pleasure & utility of it. In the first place my own affairs demand my personal attention. In the second place, there are those *in Ohio* who would construe such a visit to mean on my part every thing but what it really did mean. I have seen already enough in the quarter to which I allude, to satisfy me that everything I may do or say, will be misunderstood & tortured into something never dreamed of by me. I heard enough at Chicago to warrant me in this conclusion. Burnt in effigy, reviled & villified by all the Loco focos in the Union & only just *tolerated* by a large portion of the Whigs, yet it seems I am nevertheless by some considered as a *hopeful applicant* & very much in the way of better men. It was to avoid if possible all appearance of evil, that I declined even *answering* the call to accept a dinner in Cincinnati this spring. I still cling to the belief that the Whig party only can save us a government worth having, & I fear disunion in that party quite as much as a dismemberment of the States. I may be wrong in this, I can't help it. I am resolved as a matter of public duty, to do nothing which may tend to alienate the feelings of the leading men of that party, towards each other. All this is in *perfect confidence*. I may add that I have been solicited to visit Boston on the ground that

³⁹ Judge Daniel Mosely of Buffalo.

it would prevent the nomination (as far as N[ew] England was concerned) of Gen^l Taylor or any one else but myself. Though I have no idea Much would be the result, yet I doubt not it would be charged that such was my *motive*. I shall be in Cincinnati all the next two weeks & will then show you the letters the grounds for what, otherwise you might consider idle fancies in me. If any thing should occur to change these views & I can spare the time, I may go with you. I go to the Circuit court this day.

Yrs truly

W Greene

Tho Corwin

XVII

Lebanon, 3d Sept. 1847

Dear Greene,

I had considered, & decided on the subject of your letter, before I rec^d it. I reconsidered the case, & could not find enough in the newly discovered evidence to reverse the decree. The death of Gov[ernor] Wright⁴⁰ is favorable to the right adjustment of all questions growing out of the Mexican War. It drives the Democratic party to take either Van Buren⁴¹ or Benton,⁴² or Woodberry.⁴³

Van Buren was opposed to the War & every folly that led to it. Benton is in the same category & whether he is *the* candidate or not, will I predict at the next session play the Oregon game over again. How! His notions of boundary will confine him to the Neuces. He can take the desert from thence to the Rio Grande & pay for it the debts due our citizens. The Rio Grande is then the boundary, of *Texas*, & *Texas is in the Union*. The Wilmot Proviso⁴⁴ can't apply to her, no other territory being acquired the Wilmot Proviso *dies*, & with it Calhoun⁴⁵ & his

⁴⁰ Silas Wright of New York, elected Governor, 1844, renominated 1846 but defeated.

⁴¹ In 1848 an unsuccessful Presidential candidate of the section of Democrat party termed Barnburners or Freesoilers.

⁴² Thomas Hart Benton, U. S. Sen.

⁴³ Levi Woodbury of New Hampshire.

⁴⁴ Proviso excluding slavery from the territories.

⁴⁵ John C. Calhoun.

southern party. Cass⁴⁶ being of *that* party, falls with it, & so Benton has the field clear for himself or Van Buren as the Balt[i-more] Convention shall decide. To all this, Van Buren, from consistency & interest will agree. If Woodberry is taken, he being a northern man, cannot be "got up," unless he conciliates Northern votes by a stand in favor of limiting slavery. This if done kills him in the South. He will not be run unless by a division South & North of the Democrats, in such event he might be run by the southern party.

Thus I infer that Democracy, or the wing of it, will aid us, in settling the War, *without acquisition of new territory*. There is therefore less necessity than before for Whig effort on this subject.

But suppose we rely *only* on Whigs. Why go to Western N[ew] York & Boston to stir them up, *they* as their papers show, are all right on this point. I have full information both by letters & papers on this subject. The danger lies in the gunpowder stupidity of Pennsylvania Whigs, & the crack brained chivalry of Kentucky.

The only effect therefore of my visit to Buffalo & Boston, would be, to rouse a strong moral feeling against the war, & thus to some extent, produce an Anti-Taylor party there. To this I will in no way contribute, while my name is even remotely associated (as it is now) with the Presidency. Don't imagine now, that I have any idea that my visit & speaking *there*, or elsewhere, would supplant Gen^l Taylor, Judge McLean or anybody else. I only say it might *to some extent*, bring me somewhat more prominently before the people, and it would certainly be ascribed as my motive.

If it were an *indispensable public duty*, I think I could do it, in defiance of all consequences, as it is *not so*, in my view of it, I feel justified in staying at home. Am I right or not—say to me what you think of it.

Truly yr friend

W. Greene, Esq.

Tho Corwin

⁴⁶ He resigned his place in U. S. Sen. upon his nomination, May 1848, as a candidate for the Presidency.

XVIII

Washington, 24th Decr '47

Dear Greene,

I recd yours today. Judge Wright asked me at Columbus who I preferred for Pres[iden]t. I answered Clay⁴⁷ if we can get him. Who next? I answered *as matters now stand*, Judge McLean.

I said this *sincerely*. I will never vote for Taylor, until I know *what he thinks* & what he will do on certain *vital* points. If Scott were a candidate & *at home* I might pause, as I have much better opinion of him than many of my friends. I have not *now*, nor never had the remotest belief that I should be selected & have, only witheld a positive declination at the earnest entreaty of some, yourself amongst them, who thought good might come from the maintaining of my present position. I so cordially detest the little arts by which I see these great events are managed, that I feel self degraded so long as I have even a remote connexion with the subject. I may express to you a sentiment or principle which I have always felt, but seldom if ever expressed. I would never accept the *first* office in the world, being the *second* choice. What I receive from the world, shall be on fair terms & *in its judgment*, for a full equivalent, or I will eat roots & drink ditchwater. Fabricius or some such barbarian lived on that sort of diet, & so can, & *will* I, rather than crawl on my belly, as was the fate of Eve's snake, as Moses has written it.

Yr friend

W Greene

Tho Corwin

P. S. I forgot what I took up my pen to write. I will see Vinton & Schenck & we will present you fairly.

XIX

Washington City 24th Jany 1848

Dear Greene,

I am your debtor by several letters. Your views on the general subject of Public affairs, are just my own, & I only wonder in blank amazement that they are not universal. I of course

⁴⁷ Henry Clay.

except from this remark what you say touching the use of my name as a candidate by our Ohio Convention. I cannot, could not agree with you, & I wrote to three of the leading men of the convention, giving my reasons at some length. I cannot believe that the assertion of a principle merely, through the recommendation of a man, *connected* with it, is of value to be weighed against that disunion amongst them, having a common end in view, which would have taken place in Ohio, by disappointing the friends of Judge McLean, & some few Whigs, who adhere to Gen^l Taylor. I have never been able to see *clearly*, how the retention of my name as a candidate was to produce lasting good to the country, & I have often felt that it might be, that my own vanity or selfishness prevented me from doing in this, as I have tried to do, in all other public matters, just what *my own* sense of duty & propriety should dictate. I have in this instance sacrificed some feeling & my own judgment to the opinions & wishes of many good men in Ohio & a few elsewhere. I think events are near at hand, which will release me from a most unpleasant position.

I have some private griefs, which prey upon me with incessant effect in despite of all my philosophy. I owe debts, *not of my own contracting*, but nevertheless debts which I must & will pay. I wish to do this without parting with a certain farm. You will smile, but it is *so*. I cannot willingly see the home of my father, on which his whole family lived in happy contentment pass out of my hands. I wish to end my days there in peaceful obscurity as did a good man before me. To this end I intend to appropriate myself, for the next two or three years, to the best advantage and this brings me to the main object of this letter.

What can an industrious lawyer earn in the year in Cincinnati? I mean one who will give himself *wholly* to business, with good health, & a capacity to work equal to any other. Give me as soon as you can an answer to this question. In a few months the final action of Congress will be had, on the Mexican War. When that is accomplished I can with a clear conscience, leave my seat in the senate to any good Whig. I wish this to be known to no one, as I hold a man has no right to inflict his *own* sorrows, or misfortunes, on the world, especially as in all such cases, that same world, is likely only to shrug its shoulders & pass on its own way. Nor should I have stated my case even to you, but that

I ask counsel, & have no right to conceal any part of it from my attorney.

We have a *reasonably* well authenticated rumor this morning to this effect. Trist⁴⁸ has made a treaty with Mexico. The Rio Grande to be the boundary of Texas, from its source to its mouth, & we take Upper California, paying for it 15 Millions. God grant this may be so. Peace on any terms is a blessing. Let me hear from you soon.

Yrs very truly

Tho Corwin

W. Greene

XX

Washington City 8th March 1848

Dear Greene

. You have seen, I dare say, the speculations of the papers, letter writers &c. on the subject of the expected Peace. We shall have Peace whether the present treaty be ratified or not. If the treaty now before us should not be ratified either by us or Mexico, such measures will be adopted as will doubtless end in a speedy adjustment of all our *present* difficulties. I have an abiding impression that any acquisition of Territory will only furnish an apology, perhaps a necessity, for taking more & thus lead to the final absorption of Mexico & her mongrel millions.

Yrs. truly

Tho Corwin

XXI

Senate Chamber, 16th March 1848

Dear Greene,

. We have ratified a sort of treaty, not Trist's⁴⁸ by many things more or less important. We have sent a fiery fire eater to bluster & scare Mexico into an agreement to

⁴⁸ Nicholas P. Trist. The treaty secured by him was submitted by President Polk to the Senate where it was ratified, Mar. 10, 1848.

give one third of her country to us *this* year, with an implied understanding that the ballance is to be swallowed when our anglo-saxon gastric juices shall clamor for another Cannibal breakfast.

If you would learn what is to come of all this, throw away newspapers, philosophy, and history, and read a certain Chapter⁴⁹ in "Revelations." The opening of the sixth seal will explain all.

You are to eulogize old John⁵⁰ of Quincy. Do so, and say he was always honest, often mistaken, and disowned of a Republic like Plato. Hemlock killed Socrates, a loco foco vote struck down Adams. I know not which most to pity for their silly philanthropy.

Yr friend
Tho Corwin

XXII

Washington 15th June 1848

Dear Sir

I recd your letter yesterday. I concur with you in the course you propose to pursue, & for the sole reason you assign. "We have a country to save." If I could see any future beyond '52 Cass being President in the meantime, I would not vote for Genl Taylor, nor would I have asked a convention to name my candidate *with any prospect of his nomination*, had I not thought it a crisis, demanding the United *Whig* strength of the country, to save from the *certain* ruin, that must follow the adoption of the present dogmas, of the Loco foco party. Can we carry Taylor in Ohio? Tell me the truth about [it?]. I fear the result there. Am I right? Let me know the worst.

Truly yr friend
Tho Corwin

W. Greene Esq.

⁴⁹ Sixth Chapter of Revelations, v. 12.

⁵⁰ John Quincy Adams.

XXIII

Washington City Dec. 24th, '48

Dear Sir

I recd your letter & with it the "Charles Hammond",⁵¹ this is undoubtedly the only clear legal & logical presentation of the subject which has hitherto met my eye. It is just such an argument as without saying too much, leaves nothing more to be said. If reason has any agency in human affairs (which I have much doubted for some time) it must tend powerfully, wherever read, to bring the public mind to its right position.

The free soil movement at Columbus to which you hereby allude, is as yet all shrouded in mystery here, I can find no one able (or willing if they can) to give me its aspect its tendency or distinct aims. Pray write me fully on this point. I have suspected *some* of the leaders of that party long, for selfish motives. The entire abandonment of the rank & file, to the orders of the officers in that party, will render it a great curse unless the purest motive with the highest intelligence combine to animate & direct those *officers*.

I dare say you feel anxious to know what signs of coming toils & honors are apparent *here*. All is doubt & darkness, the keenest scented hound in the kennel here has not a nose sensible or sensitive enough, to track the great secret to its den- the silent uncommunicative bosom of "Old Zach."⁵² One thing- one solitary fact is known, known even to me, he will make no selections, *with one exception* till he comes here & advises with such as he shall choose to consult. Thereupon arises certain grave doubts. Who is this *one* exception! What darling Unit! What solitary *great one*, of the 800 millions of God's creatures now living on the surface of the planet is *he*! The very ladies sigh to hear "that one loved name," & sink back in hopeless blank ignorance of the mighty secret. And then again, *Who* will he choose to consult? If you but breathe that fearful interrogation, the terrified gentleman thus addressed will glance furtively & fearfully around & with

⁵¹ Article published in Ohio State Jour. Dec. 21, 1848, and Washington National Intelligencer, Dec. 28th. foll. It is headed "The True State of the Case" and signed "Charles Hammond" and is an exposition of the difficulties in the Ohio Legislature occasioned by two sets of claimants to right to seats, showing that the Whigs were right in the controversy.

⁵² Zachary Taylor.

silent footfall approach you, his eyes meantime seem multiplied into the full ocular equipment of Argus, and his hand pressed on one side of his nose till the blood settles under his finger nails, his mouth screwed into the dimensions of a hand-bellows nozzle & with this projected into the very tympanum, he will sibilate in interjected semi monosyllables Tru-ru-u-m-a-a-n⁵³ Sm-i-i-th!!! Then you may see querist & repliant fly apart, & stare wildly at each other for an instant, & with a loud snort, like a wild horse when he jumps in a dark night over a chunk of "Fox fire", both collapse into the ordinary thoughts of mortal men.

I take this, & such like symptoms in the great diseased public mind to indicate the existence of a malady something more to be dreaded than Cholera & Soft soap & mustard are all ineffectual to cure this new chronic sickness of the immortal souls of men. There are two Maiden ladies, very ancient & like all old things not very lovely, who are doomed to visit these aspirants both the fortunate & the unfortunate. Their names are Disappointment & Regret. The last named will sting with sickness of the heart & fury of the brain all such as fail in their hopes. The first will come to disenchant the eyes of the successful & strip the object gained of half, perhaps all its charms.

But I am quite forgetful of my object in writing you, who do you believe will be senator in case organization is possible? Who, Judges! If I have correspondents at Columbus they are so full of insurrection they have entirely forgotten me.

Yr friend

Tho Corwin

W Greene Esq
Cinci, Ohio

XXIV

Washington Jany 31st '49

Dear Greene,

I recd your last from Columbus this morning. You had prepared me for the result announced in y[ou]r letter. I had come to the conclusion that the two "ballance of power" gentlemen were arrant knaves, & should have been disappointed had they acted

⁵³ He was Rep. in Cong. fr. Conn., 1839-1841; 1845 & 1847; and elected U. S. Sen. 1849, resigned 1854.

otherwise than as rogues should act. My friend we must get back to the Westminster Confession. "Man is altogether depraved" & without Almighty constraining grace incapable of a good word, thought or deed. I think we shall have facts for that henceforth.

So you want State secrets! There are none here, or if here they are studiously concealed from me & such as I would be-gentlemen- I mean. Should you know my conjectures- here they are, Crittenden⁵⁴ or Clayton⁵⁵ Secy of State, T. Smith⁵⁶ or Evans⁵⁷ Treas[ur]y, *perhaps* Lawrence,⁵⁸ C B Smith⁵⁹ P. M. Gen[era]l. If Ewing⁶⁰ (who I believe should) get the treasury, then Lawrence may be Secy of the Navy. You may fill up the others with any man you think of & be as near the future truth as I am. You see we have sent young Cass⁶¹ to Rome- a dandy of the stupid sort. Is he not a Marvellous proper man to seize the spirit which heaves all Europe from its foundations!!! What function besides has a Minister *now* at Rome. Nay what can he do without such power at this time any where in Europe. Who are our Mighty ones there. In Paris Richard Rush⁶² a senile Pedant. In London Bancroft,⁶³ a hypocrit in Religion & politics & something a *little* better in letters. At Vienna Donaldson⁶⁴ a horse Jockey!!! O, Model Republic, thou who dost move in the front of the present solemn Exodus of Nations these are thy great ones!! Will it be better for the next four years? Ask the future, that obstinate dame that will not answer, question her importunately as you will. Let us hope- there is some pleasure in chasing the butterfly,

⁵⁴ John J. Crittenden, at this time Governor of Kentucky, having resigned from U. S. Sen.

⁵⁵ John M. Clayton, U. S. Sen. but chosen Sec. of State under Prest. Taylor.

⁵⁶ Truman Smith.

⁵⁷ Probably George Evans of Maine, who had been Rep. in Cong. and U. S. Sen. In 1849 he was Comr. of Board of Claims agst. Mexico.

⁵⁸ Abbott Lawrence declined Prest. Taylor's invitation into his cabinet, later was minister plen. to London.

⁵⁹ Caleb B. Smith, leaving Cong. 1849, was appointed comr of Board of claims agst. Mexico.

⁶⁰ Thomas Ewing became Sec. of Interior, 1849.

⁶¹ Lewis Cass, Jr. Chargés d'Affaires at Rome.

⁶² Richard Rush of Pa. was Minister Plen. at Paris.

⁶³ George Bancroft, Minister Plen. at London.

⁶⁴ Andrew J. Donelson, Minister Plen. at Vienna.

though his golden tints all disappear the moment we touch his wings.

When I know or believe any thing I will instantly inform you what *it* is

Yr friend

W Greene

Tho Corwin

XXV

Washington 22d March '49

Dear Sir

We are locked up. the only leisure we have is *here*. The moment the doors open we are each and all beseiged, literally captured.

Minnesota is assured. The only *new* patronage we had, & it was indeed a difficult game of chess- the way it was played I will explain when I see you. No vancancies will be created *just now*. Were it not for Benton's move on the Mexican "Protocal" we could adjourn in ten minutes. Perhaps we shall get away on Saturday or Monday next.

Private

Genl Green⁶⁵ & myself have agreed to wait a day or two after the adjournment. We shall place you right on the Record, our doct(?) will be signed by some of the best men in the senate. We shall propose a mission first & a Consulate in failure of that.

T C.

XXVI

Lebanon 6th Sept. 1849

Dear Greene,

I recd your letter yesterday. I cannot say in truth that I regretted the determination it announced. I should have been glad, if the kind of service you could render had been at the command of the Gov[ernmen]t in that place, and yet with you, I

⁶⁵ Albert C. Greene, Sen. from Rhode Island, 1845-1851.

much believe, the Republic has problems of higher import for you to solve. Why they don't know this, is a problem too, & one for which I can furnish no rational solution. I was told by an old stager when in Cin[cinna]ti that I was *a child* in such matters. I hope I shall never reach majority, that is, in his sense of the word, yet if I must be put on my "voir dire" I am bound to say, that I think I understand these matters like a *man* but am not quite ready to prosecute them like a *knave*. In good truth & soberness, when we look at the naked facts of *present* as well as past history, *manly modesty*, seems quite excluded from the boards, & strutting pretension, with a dash of hypocritical reverence for some ideal of the hour is deafened with plaudits from the pit to gallery. You will find the benefit of this latter fellow well patronized. If he dies soon he is happy & Clio embalms him for the admiration of posterity- if he lives long, his history is apt to be somewhat less enviable.

Will you without naming it to any one name to me as soon as possible a man for this place, in Cin[cinna]ti. Let him be honest; have a good capacity for legal & logical investigation, and a will to work, a Trinity of virtues you will say somewhat rare. I ought to add that he will be likely, to be the more acceptable, should he belong to the genus "Young Whiggery." Perhaps this last accident, with the Supreme powers might be indispensable. Have not all natural Animal bodies, tails as well as heads? Butler thought so, it may be so. (God forgive my treason) "in this our day & time". Do you remember the Analogy of the Fly, not in Butler's Analogy, but in that other Butler's Hudibras,

"Thus as a fly that goes to bed,
"Sleeps with its tail above its head,
"So, in this Commonwealth of ours,
"The rabble are the Supreme powers—"

Don't understand me as meaning any thing like the poet's thought- the very reverse of it. I only intended to signify that our kings at Washington like other monarchs of former times may indulge a penchant for low company.

Would you account for the foregoing nonsense- a shower is falling & I can't get out of doors. God bless you.

Tho. Corwin

XXVII

Washington City 13th July 1850

Private

Dear Sir

I recd your letter this morning, The general belief *here* is that a total change in the Cabinet is certain. I think it will be so. I regret this as to one at least, who, I think all things considered, should be retained. But I have no doubt all will go.

At present the succession is not settled. Webster is most likely to go into the State Dept. The loss of Genl Taylor just now, more than at any other time, was a sore National calamity.

In a week or two, we shall know who is who; I shall not fail to make known your wishes & press your claims.

Yrs truly

Tho Corwin

XXVIII

Washington 29th Decr. 1850

Dear Greene

Do you ever perpetrate that grossest of all official indiscretions, writing a letter not on public business, or in your case, business of the Company? Did Cadmus⁶⁶ really intend, when he took letters to Greece anything beyond Accounts, Bills of Exchange, & Ballance Sheets? I doubt it. It seems a long long time since I had a right free conversation with a sensible man. O, for a single day in some quiet sunny spot with a good book & a true friend! This cruising for political Pirates is a savage, hard Herculean sort of work. It requires such keen villainous circumspection, such vigilant wakeful disquietude, such labor of the brain & such a tough leathery heart. God forgive me the sin of entering upon such a work. It has ruined a rather clever good for nothing sort of a friend of yours. I am in grim earnest when I assure you I have no credence in me, I believe nothing, hope nothing, fear nothing, love nothing, hate nothing. Why should I believe anything! Have I not seen a plain truth within my own personal knowledge made into a palpable lie in the judgment

⁶⁶ Reference to the bringing of the old Phonecian alphabet to Greece.

of every body else, Why should I hope for any thing. Have I not seen men live in hopeful visions that might have delighted Napoleon & in a single day bowed down to the dust under crushing disappointment. Why should I love anything- The thing I love today smites me with hatred & obloquy tomorrow. And again why hate anything since God made it only to live for a moment & howsoever much I abhor it today I find it withering in the gripe of decay or death tomorrow. And to sum up all why complain! The old philosophy is still now & must ever be eternally true. "Man walketh in a vain shadow & disquieteth himself in vain." So give croaking to the dogs & Ho! for a happy New Year to you, which you shall have if prayer of mine can bring it.

Have you seen a leaden production entitled "A Treas[ur]y Report." It was intended to be so dull that democracy would fall asleep in the reading of it, Modest & stupid as it was upon "protection incidental", the free trade dogs have set up a Howl throughout the entire kennel of such. More's the pity for the afor[sai]d dogs.

Shall I ever see you on this side of the Styx! Do promise me on your honor to live till the 1st of April "next ensuing", I will be in Cinci[nnati] on that day & if Mexican-Claim-fees fail not, I will "then & there" pay off a certain debt which to my infinite discomfort, hath been "of record" in your temple of Mammon for (God forgive me) oh, how long. Do you ever look out on the world? How quiet it has grown. French Communism is content to eat frogs & over a pint of "Vin Ordinaire" spout for Liberty equality & fraternity. That is easier work than running pikes through the bodies of children upon Barricades. I did think a month ago that we should have a brush between the Brandenburgs & the Hapsburgs. What a grand affair that had been. One little German Dukedom fairly on fire & I think all Europe would be somewhat singed. How it would raise the price of Pork & Lard! If Baden Baden were drenched six inches deep in gore, every acre of Miami lands would be worth two dollars more than now!! Oh, rascally Baden Baden, why will you not bleed, that *honest* farmers in Ohio might send little Jonathan to school & sweet smart little Keziah learn French. That King of Prussia is a queer chap. He calls *out* the Land Wher [Wehr?] & so the Land Wher will not be called *in*. The old companions of Blucher swear they must have a fight. King of Prussia says, no you shall not fight *now*, whereupon your whiskered Hussar resigns his

commission & swears he will not fight hereafter. Is it not very vexatious to be cheated out of our amusements, quite as bad as a rainy night when Jenny Lind sings. Well we shall at least have the satisfaction of some butchering on the other side of the line. Brazil & Buenos Ayres must & shall fight. But what is that to us, the rascals will get their flour from Chili & their Beef from the Pampa's, & we shall not make a cent by it. What dreadful times we have. Alas, for us. I see no way open but the old stupid practice of our silly fathers, that of working for an honest living. It is hard but I shall try to submit. A few months ago there was some hope that Barnwell Rhett⁶⁷ of South Carolina would make war "ad internecionem" upon thirty-one sovereign States & destroy them too- of course he would. But Barnwell's liver all at once abated its Billious operations & he like a fool as he is, preferred a seat in the senate of the same States, with "pay & mileage". Alas, for the age, I believe Pluck expired at Buena Vista, chivalry went out like a tallow candle with a stench, at Chepultepec

Page the 4th almost filled & not a word you wish to read. Served you right, as you have written nothing & been sitting quietly this whole year with your excellent wife & charming Kate by your side & I have been chained like a bear to my stake I am entitled to revenge upon you & I have it, for I am sure you will read on in the belief that the fool will certainly cease his babbling after awhile & so find at last nothing of sober truth in this mortal sheet but that ever recurring, often lying, (but upon the honor of him who was once a gentleman) in this case a most veritable & sincere addendum.

Your true & faithful friend

Tho Corwin

XXIX

Sunday 3 oclock 6th April '51

Dear Greene,

I sincerely thank you for the slip from the Enquirer. I have not seen a scrap of that kind so long, that I began to think I was certainly "functus" effete, & of no use in the world. This assures

⁶⁷ Robert Barnwell Rhett in the Congress of 1849 advocated the dissolution of the Union.

me I am yet of some account. By the way I do wish this poor Devil may repeat his lie in some more exact form. As I expect to have some leisure soon I could occupy it in settling the business with him in "due course of law", not that the play would pay for the candle, but it would be something in the way of example. The editor (whoever he is) was born a blackguard, stung by the eminent success of some of his compeers he aspires to the reputation of a liar. Poor Devil, he can't succeed. I pity him. Do you want the facts? Here they are.

Two years ago a lawyer of this city asked me for a written opinion on a claim under the Florida treaty. It was for spoliation committed by our troops in 1813. He said if the Treas[ur]y Dep[artmen]t gave a favorable decision he would give me \$2000 for my argument. If not nothing. I gave the opinion. The whole subject was referred at that time to the Att[orne]y Gen[era]l who never gave an opinion & it fell into Crittenden's hands where it now is. When I was asked to take the Treas[ur]y I objected as this case might come before me. Wm Cost (?) Johnson my client came to me, he gave me a release of all obligations as att[orne]y & I released all claim to the contingent fee of Two thousand dollars. When the surgeon got at me, Judge Berrian, now concerned in the case, insisted upon the appointment of Graham ad interim, who could act in that business (I having of course declined acting in it & proposing to resign to give way for some one who could or would act in it.) Graham was appointed- a good lawyer, a man of unapproachable purity. He & Crittenden have the business in hand. I am quite sure from what I learn, they will decide adversely to the claim. And lo! my contingent \$2000 will turn out like the paragraph you sent me, all a lie, even had I never seen the Treas[ur]y Dep[artmen]t. Now with a decision against the claim & my release also of all right to fees, before it was decided, in the hands of Johnson- under seal- what a peculation I shall make of it. Alas, poor stupid fool, no one believes his lie but still he shows his dexterity in falsehood, & in time may rise in the profession of detractions. Miserable Devil, he would sell his soul to the torments of Hell for \$2000 & very naturally concludes I would be guilty of the like crime if I could. But let him run, he will in due time go "to his own place."

I am perfectly well- better than I have been for two years. I do everything in the Treas[ur]y but sign Warrants. I have grown quite judicial, I condemn a ship & cargo- value \$300.000

& take a segar!!! Ones virtue grows *marvellously* tractable by *practice*.

And on the table tea & toast

Death Warrants &- "the Morning Post." So I think Tom Moore describes the morning "fix" of George the 4th. Well some one must sign death warrants & the same gentleman must have tea too, so why not mingle the useful with the sweet. Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci, is a maxim as old as Horace & quite as good as many other Roman proverbs. I have something to say of these same Romans. But if you have not read Merivale I shall have a fight on my "Hypothesis". God bless you & good bye.

Tho Corwin

XXX

Washington City 31st Aug 1851

Dear Greene,

- I recd your letter this morning. I recd and read your excellent (shall I be charged with flattery when I say) your incomparable pamphlet, so I deem it. What is it, great practical truths reasoned out with the precision of mathematical science. Truths almost forgotten, alas, in this age of hurry & agitations, & great clashing of the coarse material interests of men. How I do long, how my heart *sobs* for a short respite from the details of public affairs that my thoughts once more might feed & luxuriate upon the great problems of Man's true interests & the peculiar civilization planted in our political systems & National destinies. I must and will have it.

I earnestly pray for your peace of mind. Preserve *that* my friend & you are rich & great & good. Arm yourself & go into the battle of politics, I mean the actual field fights, & bid adieu to that grace which enables you to possess your soul in patience. Present me warmly to your excellent wife & daughter & allow me always to write myself

Your friend

(William Greene, Esq.

Tho Corwin

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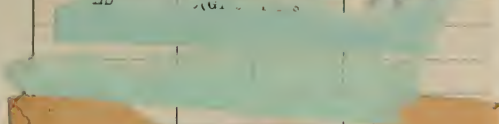
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